



The Cleveland Museum of Art

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ART MUSEUM'S FREE HOLIDAY FILM FESTIVAL BRINGS CHORUSES OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN SPIRIT

Hallelujah and Amen! African-American Spirituals and Spirituality on Film

Daily at 1:30 pm, December 26-31, 1995. Admission free.

Gospel music is the thread running through this year's free **Holiday Film Festival** at the Cleveland Museum of Art. It is heard in the documentary *Say Amen, Somebody*, the concert film *Gospel*, the Oscar-winning comedy *Lilies of the Field*, the groundbreaking "race" movie *The Blood of Jesus*, and three Hollywood classics with all-black casts (*Hallelujah*, *The Green Pastures*, *Cabin in the Sky*). Every year, film program coordinator John Ewing comes up with a special theme for the annual holiday film festival—the museum's holiday gift to its film audience—which presents a movie every afternoon between Christmas and New Year's Day. This year's edition, with five free programs offered at 1:30 every afternoon from December 26 through 31, is particularly inspirational. Says Ewing, "the combination of the *African Zion* show and the year-end holidays made the time right for a spirited, joyous, music-filled week of movies celebrating African-American Christianity."

Tues/26 Dec., 1:30 *Say Amen, Somebody* (USA, 1982, color, 100 min.) directed by George T. Nierenberg. Rousing, joyous portrait of Thomas A. Dorsey and Willie Mae Ford Smith, the "father" and "mother" of gospel music.

Wed/27 Dec., 1:30 *Hallelujah* (USA, 1929, b&w, 106 min.) directed by King Vidor. Epochal melodrama features an all-black cast in a moving, beautifully filmed tale of the fall and redemption of a southern farm hand. "The first masterpiece of the sound cinema." -*Cinema: The Magic Vehicle*.

Thu/28 Dec., 1:30 *The Blood of Jesus* (USA, 1941, b&w, 50 min.) directed by Spencer Williams, with Williams. Historically significant "race" film in which a sinful husband accidentally shoots his recently baptized wife.
The Green Pastures (USA, 1936, b&w, 90 min.) directed by William Keighley and Marc Connelly, with Rex Ingram, Oscar Polk, and Eddie Anderson. Exuberant performances transcend period stereotypes in this popular adaptation of Marc Connelly's Pulitzer Prize-winning play, a folkloric telling of Bible stories in Southern gospel vernacular.

Fri/29 Dec., 1:30 *Cabin in the Sky* (USA, 1943, b&w, 100 min.) directed by Vincente Minnelli, with Eddie "Rochester" Anderson, Lena Horne, Ethel Waters, Louis Armstrong, and Duke Ellington. Landmark, all-star musical in which God and the Devil vie for a man's soul.

Sat/30 Dec., 1:30 *Lilies of the Field* (USA, 1963, b&w, 93 min.) directed by Ralph Nelson, with Sidney Poitier and Lilia Skala. Winning, gentle comedy about a handyman who is cajoled into building a chapel for some German-speaking nuns.

Sun/31 Dec., 1:30 *Gospel* (USA, 1982, color, 92 min.) directed by David Leivick and Frederick A. Ritzenberg, with James Cleveland, Walter Hawkins, Mighty Clouds of Joy, and Shirley Caesar. Spirited, inspiring concert film.